Schemes for Upliftment of Weaker Sections

2557. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether any schemes have been/being launched by Government for upliftment of the weaker sections of the society;

(b) the funds allocated for these schemes for 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000; and

(c) the amount actually released till date to the State Governments for the purpose, State-wise particularly for the State of Jammu & Kashmir ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) All schemes being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment are aimed at the welfare of weaker sections of the Society. These schemes *inter-alia* include schemes for educational development of SCs, STs, OBCs and Minorities etc., schemes for their social and economic empowerment, providing support and opportunities for self employment, supporting NGOs and PRIs for welfare schemes for various weaker sections etc.

(b) The funds allocated to this Ministry (including Tribal Affairs) during 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 are Rs. 1208.57 crores, Rs. 1602.18 crores and Rs. 1843.57 crores respectively.

(c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Plan for Rehabilitation of the Capaitiated Persons

2558. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering or have considered any plan for socio-economic progress and rehabilitation of blind, deaf and dumb persons; and

(b) if so, broad features thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) and (b)In order to reach maximum number of disabled persons in the country, the Government have formulated several schemes specifically for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. There are four National Institutes and two apex level institutes providing manpower training as well as services for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The schemes also include six Composite Regional Resource Centres in different parts of the country to provide services for different kinds of disabilities as outreach extension centres of the National Institutes in the disability sector which include services for blind, speech and hearing impaired persons; four Regional Rehabilitation Centres for persons with spinal injuries and other orthopaedic disabilities as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with centre and state share on 90 : 10 basis; four Auxiliary Production Centres of Artificial Limb Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) for easy availability of quality aids and appliances. The Government has also set up a corporation namely National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation for economic development of the handicapped persons. In addition, the Government is providing grants to NGOs working in the field of rehabilitation of blind and speech and hearing impaired persons.

The Government is already running a District Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) scheme in 10 States to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services at the doorsteps of the handicapped. There are 11 DRCs located in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Maharashtra, M.P., Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal. A new four tier scheme namely National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities has been recently approved in the state sector in order to create infrastructure at State/Districts/ Blacks and Gram Panchayat level for providing comprehensive rehabilitation services to the handicapped. In addition over hundred districts have been identified for providing comprehensive rehabilitation services at the doorsteps of persons with disabilities. Services identified include setting up of composite fitment and rehabilitation centres in partnership venture between the National Institutes/Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India/District Rehabilitation Centre under the Central Government and District Administration/State Government.